Charles Coglilan, an actor whose previous record was fine enough to justify his engagement as Shylock, showed that night the fatal quality of *indecision.*

A worse performance than his, carried through with decision and attack, might have succeeded, but Coghlan's Shylock was not even bad. It was *nothing.*

You could hardly hear a word'he said. He spoke as though he had a sponge in his mouth, and moved as if paralysed. The perspiration poured down his face ; yet what he was doing no one could guess. It was a case of moral cowardice rather than incompetency. At rehearsals no one had entirely believed in him, and this, instead of stinging him into a resolution to triumph, had made him take fright and run away.

People felt that they were witnessing a great play with a great part cut out, and " The Merchant of Venice " ran for three weeks!

It was a pity, if only because a more gorgeous and complete little spectacle had never been seen on the English stage. Veronese's " Marriage in Cana " had inspired many of the stage pictures, and the expenditure in carrying them out had been lavish.

In the casket scene I wore a dress like almond-blossom. I was very thin, but Portia and all the ideal *young* heroines of Shakespeare ought to be thin. Fat is fatal to ideality!

I played the part more stiffly and more slowly at the Prince of Wales's than I did in later years. I moved and spoke slowly. The clothes seemed to demand it, and the setting of the play developed the Italian feeling in it, and

let the English Elizabethan side take care of itself. The silver casket scene with the Prince of Aragon was preserved, and so was the last act, which had hitherto been cut out in nearly all stage versions.